

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 033944 TOSEC 020009  
ORIGIN SS-15

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 CCO-00 /016 R

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DRAFTED BY S/S-O RPERITO

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USDEL SECRETARY AIRCRAFT IMMEDIATE

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FOLLOWING REPEAT CAIRO 2748 ACTION SECSTATE INFO JERUSALEM  
TEL AVIV 15 FEB 77

QUOTE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE CAIRO 2748

TEL AVIV FOR ABINGTON

DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS SECRETARY'S PARTY

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS/ ENRG, PFOR, EG, US, IS

SUBJECT: NEW ISRAELI HARASSMENT OF AMOCO DRILLING IN GULF OF SUEZ

REF: CAIRO 2712

1. ROSS CRAIG, AMOCO EGYPT MANAGER, HAS INFORMED US OF  
FOLLOWING FURTHER INCIDENTS IN SOUTHERN GULF OF SUEZ BLOCK  
391. AT ABOUT 10:00 P.M. FEBRUARY 14 ISRAELI PATROL BOAT,  
WHICH HAD EARLIER ORDERED WORK BOAT TO LEAVE AREA NEAR  
AMOCO DRILLING RIG 511, RETURNED. AMOCO OFFICIALS SET OUT  
IN LIGHT BOAT FROM RIG 511 AND CONVERSED WITH ISRAELI PATROL  
BOAT CAPTAIN. AGREEMENT REACHED BETWEEN THEM IN WHICH AMOCO  
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WOULD SHORTEN ANCHOR CABLES IN AREA WHICH ISRAELIS CLAIMED ON  
EASTERN SIDE OF GULF FROM 4200 TO 3000 FEET. ACCORDING  
AMOCO'S UNDERSTANDING OF CONVERSATION WITH PATROL BOAT, THIS  
WOULD ALLOW ANCHOR(S) TO BE PLACED WITHOUT FURTHER HARASSMENT.  
WORK BOAT CONTINUED OPERATIONS THROUGH THE NIGHT AND HAD  
COMPLETED ITS WORK BY DAWN FEBRUARY 15.

2. AT ABOUT 0900 FEBRUARY 15, ISRAELI PATROL BOAT RETURNED AND GAVE WORK BOAT CAPTAIN ULTIMATUM THAT HE MUST PICK UP ANCHOR(S) AND LEAVE THE AREA TO THE WEST WITHIN 24 HOURS. THERE WAS NO THREAT OF SPECIFIC CONSEQUENT ACTION, ACCORDING TO AMOCO.

3. CRAIG POINTED OUT THAT IF ANCHOR(S) IN QUESTION HAVE TO BE MOVED THEN RIG ITSELF WILL HAVE TO BE MOVED. THIS IS STEP WHICH WILL BE EXTREMELY COSTLY FOR AMOCO BECAUSE NEW SITE WILL HAVE TO BE IDENTIFIED BY GEOLOGISTS AND RIG WOULD HAVE TO REMAIN IDLE DURING THAT PROCESS. ACCORDING CRAIG HE DOES NOT INTEND COMPLY WITH DEMAND TO REMOVE ANCHORS. HE ASKED FOR USG ASSISTANCE IN CLEARING UP MATTER QUICKLY.

4. ALMOST IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING CRAIG'S CALL, AHMED HILLAL, MINISTER OF PETROLEUM, CALLED AMBASSADOR TO INFORM HIM OF INCIDENT WHICH IS TAKING PLACE IN BLOCK 391 AND TO REQUEST USG ASSISTANCE IN MAKING SURE RIG REMAINS ON CURRENT LOCATION. HILLAL SAID HE HAD BEEN IN CONTACT WITH FOREIGN MINISTER FAHMY WHO HAD ASKED HIM TO CALL AMBASSADOR TO REQUEST THAT THIS MATTER BE BROUGHT TO IMMEDIATE ATTENTION OF SECRETARY VANCE. FAHMY HAS ALSO TALKED WITH AMBASSADOR ABOUT THIS LATEST INCIDENT AND ASKED FOR SECRETARY'S INTERVENTION.

5. COMMENT: WE DO NOT KNOW AT THIS MOMENT WHETHER, IF AMOCO FAILS TO REMOVE THE OFFENDING ANCHOR(S), ISRAELI GUNBOAT WILL CUT THEM. WE ASSUME THIS IS A DISTINCT POSSIBILITY WHEN DEADLINE EXPIRES. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN, TOO, WHETHER DEPT'S PRESS SPOKESMAN'S LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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COMMENTS ON ISRAELI DRILLING ACTIVITIES IN THE GULF OF SUEZ WILL MAKE GOI MORE OR LESS ADAMANT. COMING ON HEELS OF THAT STATEMENT, THE PRESENT INCIDENT MAY TURN OUT TO BE A TEST CASE. EGYPTIANS WERE HEARTENED BY DEPT PRESS SPOKESMAN'S COMMENTS AND HAVE ASKED SECRETARY TO INTERVENE.

6. AMOCO IS CONCERNED ABOUT PHYSICAL SAFETY OF RIG 511, WHICH IS VALUED AT APPROXIMATELY \$55 MILLION. WILL BE RECALLED THAT IN PREVIOUS MARINER INCIDENT, ISRAELI PATROL BOATS THREATENED PHYSICALLY CUT ANCHOR LINES, WHICH, IF DONE, WOULD HAVE CAUSED CONSIDERABLE DAMAGE TO RIG ITSELF. TO BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE NO SUCH THREAT HAS BEEN MADE IN THIS INSTANCE, BUT AMOCO UNDERSTANDABLY HAS SOME MISGIVINGS ABOUT SAFETY OF ITS RIG.

7. WE HAVE NO INDICATION THAT EITHER GOE OR AMOCO PURPOSELY TIMED POSITIONING OF RIG AT NEW SITE TO COINCIDE WITH SECRETARY'S TRIP IN ORDER TO FORCE THE

US TO FOCUS ON THE ISSUE. IN FACT, AS REPORTED IN  
76 CAIRO 16361 AND PREVIOUS, CRAIG INFORMED EMBOFF ON  
NOVEMBER 26 OF AMOCO'S PLANS FOR THIS AREA. IN PLAN  
FOR PRESENT OPERATION, AMOCO PROJECTION THROUGHOUT HAS  
BEEN THAT THE ACTUAL DRILLING OPERATION INCLUDING ANCHORS  
WOULD NOT IN ANY WAY BE EAST OF THE MEDIAN LINE. AMOCO  
NOW STATES THAT ACCORDING ISRAELI POSITIONING OF MEDIAN  
LINE, AT LEAST ONE AND POSSIBLY MORE ANCHORS ARE  
APPARENTLY EAST OF THE MEDIAN LINE.  
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## Message Attributes

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